



Clean Energy Future Committee

Date: March 22, 2024
Time: 8:15 – 9:30 a.m.
Hybrid Format Meeting

Minutes

Attendance:

- Members Remote: Aimee Graeber, Amos Meeks (left @ 9:00), David Morgan, Eric Helmuth (left @ 9:05), James DiTullio, Nellie Aikenhead (joined @ 8:40), Pasi Miettinen, Ryan Katofsky (as Chair), Shelly Dein
- Members In-person: Talia Fox
- Members Absent: Jim Feeney, John Alessi, Marc Breslow
- Also attending: Pat Hanlon

R. Katofsky convened the meeting at 8:18 am.

- **Virtual Meeting Reminders**
 - If there is a technical failure, we will try to relaunch the meeting three times.
 - If we are unable to relaunch and there are more than 20 minutes left in the meeting, the CEFC will reconvene the following Friday.
 - If there are fewer than 20 minutes left, the CEFC will carry the remaining agenda items forward to the next meeting.
- **Review and Approve 1/19/2024 Meeting Minutes & Update**
 - January 19, 2024 meeting minutes were reviewed with one edit during meeting. A. Graeber, A. Meeks, E. Helmuth, J. DiTullio, P. Miettinen, R. Katofsky, S. Dein, and T. Fox voted in favor. D. Morgan abstained.

1. Updates

a. ACE Contract Renewal

- R. Katofsky

Presented to select board with T. Fox on Monday about the Arlington Community Electricity (ACE) contract renewal details. Potential savings on new contract might be between one and two cents per kWh. Savings may allow increasing percent renewable without raising price. Select Board would like to get the Town to 100% Class I RECs procurement, with 60% Class I RECs as a minimum. Eliminate 50% opt up product because the product would be redundant. Keep current 100% optional product, which procures 100% additional Class I RECs. Pre-bid meeting and bid meeting coming up for contract offers.

Individuals and families financially struggling may find this burdensome and have to opt-out or down. This was discussed at Select Board meeting, outreach can be done to inform residents about the opt down option. Utility users are still eligible for low-income discounts under the program. Low-income utility users might still want to participate in full product without opting down but may not be able to due to income restraints.

The contract doesn't guarantee beating regular utility rates. Community input to Select Board for increasing the percentage really pushed this issue forward.

The three-year contract term length yields better rates than shorter one- or two-year agreements. Pricing is a blend of capacity and supply sources, and capacity is based on a three-year outlook. Not likely to see longer bid terms, and longer bid terms could result in higher rates. Exploring other types of procurement like virtual power purchase agreements with solar farms could get prices directly from clean energy products for possibly longer periods of time.

What other variables could be adjusted in the market to reduce prices?

b. Warrant Article 11 & Fossil Fuel Free Demonstration Program

- T. Fox

Select Board voted in favor to change the definition of major renovation, adding changes of use and additions to the definition.

Accepted into Fossil Fuel Free Demonstration Program. The Fossil Fuel Free (FFF) bylaw takes effect May 21st, which is 90 days after official approval from DOER. Town will hold a builders forum on April 10th with a representative from Mass Save and Mike Ciampa, to review resources available for new construction and major renovations. Opportunity for development community to understand new rules.

Attendees to the builders forum will include builders and developers that are actively completing work in Town, contacts will mostly come from Mike Ciampa. Notices about changes in by-law are also seen when applying for permits online. The real estate community often works closely with developers and could be important to include in outreach for the bylaw.

Are there other items for Town Meeting that CEFC should be advocating for? An article for shaded parking lots with capacity for more than 25 vehicles to have shade using a solar array. Could move the next meeting to April 19th to discuss Town Meeting more before Town Meeting meets.

c. Climate Leader Communities

- T. Fox

Green communities 2.0 program application due in July. Need to pass zero emission vehicle policy and municipal decarbonization road map, for Town and schools.

2. Fossil Fuel Free Bylaw Waiver Guidance

- T. Fox

Feedback on waiver guidance before taking to Selectboard.

Waiver in Fossil Fuel Free Bylaw

- Waivers can be granted where “compliance with the provisions of this bylaw makes a project financially infeasible or impractical to implement.”
- The Select Board is to provide guidance regarding the granting of waivers and prescription of conditions for these waivers.
- What are these conditions? How do we create a waivers process that is fair while generally achieving the objectives of the bylaw?

Ideas for defining “financially infeasible”

- No fossil fuel free equipment exists that could meet building requirements for less than...
 - o A certain percentage of the project cost (what is the right %?)
 - o A certain percentage of the of the equivalent fossil fuel equipment (e.g., 150%)
- Electric upgrades that would not otherwise be required do not exceed
 - o A certain percentage of the project cost/a certain amount (what is the right percent or amount?)
- Other factors that might contribute to financial infeasibility
 - o Time delays (supply chain issues, utility issues)
 - o What else that we might need to build into the process?

Defining “impractical to implement”

- Some ideas:
 - o Onsite conditions render installation impossible or financially infeasible
 - o Nature of the use require specialty equipment that only uses fossil fuels (assuming there is no existing, reasonably priced electric alternative)
- Other factors that might contribute to impracticability...
 - o Ideas?

The percentage of project cost may not be in line with how projects evaluate costs.

Using the percentage of equivalent fossil fuel equipment may be more in line with how projects evaluate costs. Delays may render projects unfeasible, for example a one-year delay on a specific equipment required for electrical upgrades. Most projects are looking at the absolute dollars and not percentage of total.

Delays may not necessarily stop certain aspects of projects from completion, depending on situation.

An example for impractical is the Bunsen burners in the science labs at the schools, no suitable electric alternative exists.

When comparing costs against fossil fuels, should be compared against the most efficient fossil fuel equipment and not the cheapest least efficient option. What are other communities doing for exceptions? Time delays may be an issue, but the project is short term compared to the long term (20 year) time frame for how long the infrastructure would stay. Other delays, not related to implementing the Fossil Fuel Free bylaw, may push back project timelines and render delays associated with Fossil Fuel Free implementation a non-issue.

The regulation shouldn't be overly complicated, closing off experimentation. The by-law guidelines can be modified by the Select Board at any time, in response to actual implementation. Copied from Brookline that the waiver should be as narrow as possible.

Must pass waiver before May 21st and take to Select Board April 8th. Can delay if necessary but try to provide feedback on waiver guidance before then.

- **Confirm Next Meeting Date April 26th**

Committee decided to move next meeting up to **April 19th** to include discussions about warrant articles before Town Meeting starts.

- **Other items to discuss**

R. Katofsky

How to handle inbound requests to this committee to sponsor events. Mothers OutFront asked for CEFC to sponsor an event related to gas leaks on April 3rd. Not sure if the Town has a policy for committees endorsing events put on by other groups or if there is protocol for committees to sponsor events. Gas leaks task force was also asked to sponsor and is running the sponsorship by the town manager. May not be able to sponsor this event but what does the committee want to consider as a process for sponsoring events? Perhaps groups could pitch or provide info in advance of a CEFC meeting. Wouldn't want to make it a difficult process. Could the Chair be empowered to make decisions for sponsorship so that the committee doesn't spend too much time on it?

Quorum was lost at 9:29. S. Dein moved to adjourn, P. Miettinen seconded. Unanimous vote in favor to adjourn at 9:33.

Submitted by Aimee Graeber 4/8/2024